

Statement on Establishing the Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group
March 1, 2002

A prolonged drought and complex Federal and State legal issues have made for difficult times in the Klamath River Basin. Today I am establishing the Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group to address concerns raised by farmers, ranchers, fishermen, tribes, and others affected by these difficult conditions. I have directed Secretary Norton, Secretary Veneman, Secretary Evans, and CEQ Chairman Connaughton to advise me of the immediate and long-term actions necessary to enhance water quality and quantity and to address the other complex economic and natural resource issues in the Klamath River Basin. I have directed the Working Group to begin their efforts immediately. I want to thank Senator Gordon Smith and Congressman Greg Walden for their commitment to working together to find a lasting solution that meets the needs of the Klamath River Basin.

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Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality

Subject: Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group

The 2001 drought in the Klamath River Basin in Oregon and California, along with Federal legal requirements regarding water use, resulted in a scarcity of water available both for agricultural use and for maintenance of water levels necessary to sustain threatened and endangered fish populations in the Klamath River Basin. Last year, the reduction in water available for irrigation caused severe economic consequences in the Basin. Ensuring that the farming community has access to sufficient water supply while complying with Federal environmental laws and respecting Tribal trust obligations will involve complex economic and legal issues that call for the immediate attention of Cabinet-level officials and others. Accordingly, I direct as follows:

1. *Establishment.* There is hereby established the Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group, which shall consist of the following officers of the Federal Government or other such officers designated by them: the Secretary of the Interior, who shall serve as Chair; the Secretary of Agriculture; the Secretary of Commerce; and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality. Any designee named by a member of the group shall be a full-time or permanent part-time officer or employee of the Federal Government. The Secretary of the Interior may invite the participation of other Federal officials as appropriate and shall preside at meetings of the Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group and shall direct its work.

2. *Mission.* The Klamath River Basin Federal Working Group shall advise the President on immediate steps and long-term solutions to enhance water quality and quantity and to address other complex issues in the Klamath River Basin. In formulating this advice, the Klamath River